

"Being" and "Having" in Estonian*

Ilse Lehist

*Sponsored in part by the National Science Foundation through Grant GN 534.1 from the Office of Science Information Service to the Computer and Information Science Research Center, The Ohio State University.

1. Introduction.

The problem to be considered in this paper is the expression of the notions of 'being' and 'having' in Estonian. The theoretical framework for the paper is provided by Charles J. Fillmore's Case Grammar, especially as elaborated in his recent paper, "Lexical Entries for Verbs."¹ In this paper, Fillmore

¹Charles J. Fillmore, "The Case for Case," Emmon Bach and Robert Harms, eds., Universals in Linguistic Theory (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston), 1968; Charles J. Fillmore, "Lexical Entries for Verbs," in Working Papers in Linguistics No. 2. I have discussed the ideas expressed in this paper with my colleagues at The Ohio State University, especially C. J. Fillmore, D. T. Langendoen, and S. S. Annear, and have received written comments from Huno Rätsep and Haldur Oim of the University of Tartu, Estonia. I, and I trust also the paper, have benefited greatly from their suggestions; however, since the suggestions were sometimes divergent and since I have not followed all of them, the responsibility for the final shape of the paper rests with me.

proposes to treat verbs as predicates (in a sense partially similar to that used in the so-called 'predicate calculus' of symbolic logic), and to classify them according to the type and number of arguments they can take. I shall claim that the distinction between 'being' and 'having' in Estonian is one of different arguments taken, under special conditions, by the same verb. I shall propose further that all Estonian verbs, including 'be', can best be classified according to the number and types of arguments they can take, and that there is no need in Estonian for a special copula.

2. Arguments of the verb 'be' expressing 'being' and 'having'.

2.1. DATIVE, LOCATIVE, and OBJECTIVE.

The problems connected with the expression of the notions of 'having' and 'being' become obvious, when one considers the surface identity of certain locative and possessive constructions in Estonian. There is no surface verb corresponding to the English verb 'have'. Possession is expressed by using a construction like

1.a. ISAL ON RAAMAT

'Father has (a) book'

where isal is the noun 'father' in the adessive case,² on is

²The fourteen cases of Estonian will be referred to by traditional names, written with lower-case letters. Deep structure cases, in the sense of Case Grammar, will be written with capital letters.

3. sg. pres. of the verb 'be', and raamat is the noun 'book' in the nom. sg. case.

Sentence 2.a. has the same surface structure:

2.a. LAUAL ON RAAMAT

'On the table is (a) book'

where laual is the noun 'table' in the adessive case, and the other two words are identical in form and meaning with the corresponding words in the preceding sentence.

In the first sentence, we can consider the verb 'be' as a predicate with two arguments, of which one indicates the possessor and the other the object possessed. (In the following, these two arguments will be referred to as DATIVE and OBJECTIVE.³)

³The arguments are labeled according to suggestions made and definitions given by Fillmore in 'Case for Case'. DATIVE is Fillmore's label for "the case of the animate being affected by the state or action identified by the verb," (p. 24) and OBJECTIVE is "the semantically most neutral case, the case of anything representable by a noun whose role in the action or state identified

by the verb is identified by the semantic interpretation of the verb itself. (p. 25)" It will be shown later that DATIVE is not restricted to animate beings in Estonian.

In the second sentence, 'be' likewise has two arguments, the first indicating location (henceforth called LOCATIVE⁴), the

⁴Fillmore, 'Case for Case': "Locative, the case which identifies the location or spatial orientation of the state or action identified by the verb." (p. 25).

second the object located (OBJECTIVE). If we consider sentence 3.a., we see that DATIVE and LOCATIVE may be simultaneously present:

3.a. EMAL ON TOIT LAUAL

'Mother has food on the table'

where emal is the noun 'mother' in the adessive case, toit is the noun 'food' in the nominative case, and laual the noun 'table' in the adessive case.

Let us consider the surface cases in which these three arguments may appear, leaving aside for the moment the question of additional arguments (i.e., the possibility that 'be' may have more than three arguments, as well as the possibility that there may be arguments standing in relationships to 'be' that are different from OBJECTIVE, DATIVE, and LOCATIVE).

DATIVE appears on the surface in the adessive case. LOCATIVE may appear in several other cases in addition to the adessive:

4.a. MEES ON MAALT

'The man is from the country' (ablative)

5.a. MEES ON LINNAST

'The man is from town' (relative)

6.a. MEES ON LINNAS

'The man is in (the) town' (inessive)

It appears to me that these three, plus the adessive, are the only surface cases that may manifest the LOCATIVE with the verb 'be'. The distinction between internal and external local cases is in some instances automatic; e.g., a place name may 'require' internal or external local cases. This is true, for example, for the names of the two Estonian towns Tapa and Tartu, the first of which 'requires' external local cases, the second internal ones. In other instances the selection of an internal or external local case carries a semantic difference. The problem will not be considered any further in the present paper.⁵

⁵The fact that there are semantic differences associated with the surface local cases that manifest the deep structure case LOCATIVE presents serious problems in determining the relationship between the cases of Case Grammar and semantics. If I understand Case Grammar correctly, the cases constitute semantic relationships, and there is no semantic layer "below" that of cases. However, the generalization involved in using LOCATIVE makes this case into an intermediate stage between what the speaker wants to say and the surface case form in which the argument in LOCATIVE finally emerges. It is questionable whether such a many-to-one-to-many mapping is justified. The alternative would be to recognize as many deep structure cases as there are surface cases. The same problem arises in connection with other deep structure cases where the choice of the surface case reflects a semantic difference, e.g., the ESSIVE.

The allative and illative cases, although properly local cases, seem to me to fulfill different functions with the verb 'be'; consider, for example, sentences 7.a. and 8.a.:

7.a. KIRI ON ISALE

'The letter is for the father'

where isale is the noun 'father' in the allative case, and the argument expresses the function Fillmore has called BENEFACTIVE.⁶

⁶The term is introduced by Fillmore in 'Case for Case', (p. 32) to express the being for whose benefit the action of the verb takes place. The term is not defined as precisely as the other deep structure cases.

8.a. LAPS ON ISASSE

'The child is like (takes after) the father'
where isasse is the noun 'father' in the illative case. I do not believe this construction to be productive in the same sense as the other constructions (LOCATIVE and BENEFACTIVE) discussed in this context, and prefer to treat it as an idiom, as far as the relationship with 'be' is concerned.

The argument OBJECTIVE may be in the nominative or partitive case. All nouns may appear in the nominative singular. Mass nouns may also appear in the partitive singular. If OBJECTIVE is in the plural, all nouns may appear in nominative plural (mass nouns only in special instances), and count nouns may also be in the partitive plural. There is a semantic difference associated with the selection of partitive or nominative: the partitive expresses the notion that only a part of the noun in OBJECTIVE role is under consideration. Some examples:

1.b. ISAL ON RAAMATUD

'Father has (the) books'

2.b. LAUAL ON RAAMATUD

'On the table are (the) books'

3.b. EMAL ON TOIDUD LAUAL

'Mother has the food (here: separate dishes, different kinds of food) on the table'

4.b. MEHED ON MAALT

'The men are from the country'

5.b. MEHED ON LINNAST

'The men are from the town'

6.b. MEHED ON LINNAS

'The men are in the town'

7.b. KIRJAD ON ISALE

'The letters are for the father'

8.b. LAPSED ON ISASSE

'The children take after the father'

- 1.c. ISAL ON RAAMATUID
'The father has (some) books'
- 2.c. LAUAL ON RAAMATUID
'On the table are (some) books'
- 3.c. EMAL ON TOITU LAUAL
'Mother has (some) food on the table'
- 4.c. EMAL ON TOITE LAUAL
'Mother has (some) dishes (some kinds of food) on the table'
- 5.c. MEHI ON MAALT
'(Some) men are from the country'
- 6.c. MEHI ON LINNAST
'(Some) men are from the town'
- 7.c. MEHI ON LINNAS
'(Some) men are in the town'
- 8.c. ISALE ON KIRJU
'There are some letters for the father'

The idiomatic nature of sentence 8 seems to preclude a surface partitive.

2.2. Topicalization.

I inverted the word order in 8.c., because KIRJU ON ISALE seemed to me less natural. The rules for word order have not been conclusively formulated for Estonian, and they may resist formulation for some time; however, they seem to play a certain part in deciding whether a given adessive case fulfills the function of LOCATIVE or DATIVE. Let us consider the following sentences:

9.a. LAUAL ON NELI JALGA

10.a. NELI JALGA ON LAUAL

Both sentences contain the same words: the noun laud 'table' in the adessive, the verb on 'be' 3. sg. pres., and the phrase neli jalga 'four legs' (neli is the numeral 4 in the nominative, jalga is the noun jalg 'leg' or 'foot' in partitive singular,

the surface case being governed by the numeral). Realized with neutral intonation, sentence 9.a. would mean 'The table has four legs', and 10.a. would be glossed as 'Four legs (or feet) are on the table'; in other words, laua1 functions as DATIVE in 9.a. and as LOCATIVE in 10.a. Sentence 9.a. would answer the question 'What does the table have?', whereas 10.a. would answer the question 'Where are the four legs?'

Let us reconsider sentence 2.a.: LAUAL ON RAAMAT 'On the table is a book'. This sentence would answer the question 'What is on the table?' Another permutation of 2,

2.d. RAAMAT ON LAUAL

'The book is on the table'
would answer the question 'Where is the book?'

The word laua1 'on the table' functions as LOCATIVE in both sentences, although formally sentence 2.a., LAUAL ON RAAMAT, might also mean 'The table has a book', in the same way as 9.a. means 'The table has four legs'. Sentences 2.a. and 9.a. have identical surface structures; yet in 2.a., laua1 is clearly LOCATIVE and in 9.a. clearly DATIVE. Obviously semantic considerations enter into the picture here; we know that a table may 'possess' four legs, but may not 'possess' a book except in some metaphoric, poetic sense.⁷

⁷It is clear that if the label DATIVE is to be used for the argument of 'be' that indicates the possessor, the noun in DATIVE need not be animate.

However, there is a difference in focus (topicalization) between RAAMAT ON LAUAL and LAUAL ON RAAMAT. The order OBJECTIVE-'be'-LOCATIVE seems to be neutral; the order LOCATIVE-'be'-OBJECTIVE seems to indicate that OBJECTIVE is 'in focus'. As was indicated above, sentence 2.d. would answer the question 'Where is the book?', while sentence 2.a. would answer the

question 'What is on the table?' Topicalization produced by changing the position of arguments may be overridden by emphasis manifested by phonological means. While RAAMAT ON LAUAL normally answers the question 'Where is the book?', RAAMAT ON LAUAL answers the question 'What is on the table?'

These relationships between neutral word order (OBJECTIVE-'be'-LOCATIVE) and topicalization of OBJECTIVE (LOCATIVE-'be'-OBJECTIVE) apply when the two arguments, OBJECTIVE and LOCATIVE, are simultaneously present. Let us now consider the constructions where 'be' has the arguments DATIVE and OBJECTIVE.

Sentence 1.a. ISAL ON RAAMAT, answers the question 'What does the father have?' and the sentence is neutral, if no emphasis appears on any word. I see no way of topicalizing the possessor by inverting the word order:

1.d. *RAAMAT ON ISAL

? 'The book is on the father'?

seems to me unnatural and unacceptable.⁸ However, topicalization

⁸ However, if OBJECTIVE is topicalized by the use of a demonstrative pronoun or some other means, the word order OBJECTIVE-'be'-DATIVE is possible. Thus the following sentence (suggested by Huno Rätsep) is perfectly all right: SEE RAAMAT ON PROFESSOR A'L 'Professor A. has this book'.

by emphasis is possible: ISAL ON RAAMAT would answer the question 'Who has a book?'

In this sentence, I see no way of treating isal as LOCATIVE; however, the reasons for this seem to be semantic in nature. Let us therefore consider again sentences 9.a. and 10.a., where laua can be both DATIVE and LOCATIVE.

In 9.a., the normal word order is DATIVE-'be'-OBJECTIVE. The inversion given as sentence 10.a. does not change the topic, but changes the roles: laua now appears as LOCATIVE rather than DATIVE. Change of topic in 9.a. can, however, be produced by emphasis (as was the case with sentences 1 and 2 discussed above):

9.b. LAUAL ON NELI JALGA

would answer the question 'What has four legs?' rather than 'What does the table have?'. The DATIVE role of laual does not change.

In 10.a., OBJECTIVE-'be'-LOCATIVE, OBJECTIVE can be topicalized only by emphasis, not by inversion; as in the case of 9.a., the inversion would result in a change of roles. Emphasis retains the function of the arguments as before:

10.b. NELI JALGA ON LAUAL

would answer the question 'What is on the table?'. Inversion (i.e., changing 10.a. to 9.a.) would produce the same kind of change of roles as was noted above when 9.a. was converted to 10.a.

It seems that if no emphasis is present, the arguments have to appear in a given order: DATIVE precedes OBJECTIVE, and OBJECTIVE precedes LOCATIVE. If no semantic ambiguity threatens (i.e., if LOCATIVE does not involve a noun that may also function as DATIVE), the OBJECTIVE-LOCATIVE order may be inverted for a change in topicalization. This inversion is not normally possible for DATIVE-OBJECTIVE sequences; here a change in topicalization has to be shown by emphasis on DATIVE. Emphasis may also be used in OBJECTIVE-LOCATIVE sentences to change topicalization without change in position.

Let us now consider the role of word order in sentences where the predicate 'be' is accompanied by all three arguments simultaneously (OBJECTIVE, DATIVE, LOCATIVE). Consider again sentence 3.a.:

3.a. EMAL ON TOIT LAUAL

'Mother has food on the table'

where emal is DATIVE, toit is OBJECTIVE, and laual is LOCATIVE. This word order appears to me normal or neutral (unmarked): DATIVE-'be'-OBJECTIVE-LOCATIVE. The four elements allow for 24 possible orderings. I would reject 12 of these immediately as nongrammatical: those in which 'be' appears in either initial or final position, as, for example, in *ON EMAL TOIT LAUAL and

*EMAL TOIT LAUAL ON. Of the remaining 12, some are immediately acceptable, although with subtle focus differences; others are less acceptable, and still others have to be rejected. Of the six possible sentences beginning with DATIVE, I would accept two:

- 3.a. EMAL ON TOIT LAUAL D - 'be' - O - L
 3.e. EMAL ON LAUAL TOIT D - 'be' - L - O

The difference between 3.a. and 3.e. is in topicalization: 3.a. is neutral, whereas in 3.e. toit is the topic.

Of the six possible sentences beginning with OBJECTIVE, I would accept one, provided that it is pronounced with emphasis on OBJECTIVE:

- 3.f. TOIT ON EMAL LAUAL O - 'be' - D - L

Of the six possible sentences beginning with LOCATIVE, I would accept one:

- 3.g. LAUAL ON EMAL TOIT L - 'be' - D - O

In 3.g., laual would have to be produced with emphasis in order that the sentence be acceptable.

Thus four sentences are fully acceptable. Of the remaining 8 (excluding the twelve with 'be' in initial and final position) some are more acceptable than others: 3.h. and 3.i. seem more natural to me than 3.j. - 3.o., which represent various degrees of relative ungrammaticality.

- 3.h. TOIT EMAL ON LAUAL O - D - 'be' - L
 3.i. LAUAL EMAL ON TOIT L - D - 'be' - O
 3.j. *LAUAL ON TOIT EMAL
 3.k. *EMAL LAUAL ON TOIT
 3.l. *EMAL TOIT ON LAUAL
 3.m. *TOIT ON LAUAL EMAL
 3.n. *TOIT LAUAL ON EMAL
 3.o. *LAUAL TOIT ON EMAL

It appears that LOCATIVE and OBJECTIVE may change positions for purposes of topicalization: acceptable pairs are 3.a. and 3.e., 3.f. and 3.g., and (although less natural) 3.h. and 3.i. On the other hand, LOCATIVE and DATIVE may change places only if emphasis is added; inversion without emphasis would produce

a change in role. 3.e. can be changed to 3.g. only with added emphasis on LOCATIVE, if the roles of the arguments are to be maintained.

It seems to me that 3.h. and 3.i. are acceptable only if both OBJECTIVE and LOCATIVE are produced with emphasis. The unmarked order thus seems to be

D - 'be' - O - L (3.a.)

OBJECTIVE may become topic by inversion with LOCATIVE:

D - 'be' - L - O (3.e.)

DATIVE may become topic by emphasis, keeping the unmarked order. OBJECTIVE may be emphasized by inversion with DATIVE and added emphasis on OBJECTIVE:

O - 'be' - D - L (3.f.)

LOCATIVE may be emphasized by inversion with DATIVE and added emphasis on LOCATIVE:

L - 'be' - D - O (3.g.)

It appears that 3.a. and 3.h. are, furthermore, in a similar relationship to each other as 3.e. and 3.i. In both 3.h. and 3.i., there seems to be an intonation break (a 'juncture') after the first word, i.e., after toit in 3.h. and laua in 3.i. The change from 3.a. to 3.h. and 3.e. to 3.i. seems to involve a more complicated phonological process than is present in either changes of topic or changes of emphasis. For the time being I shall call this 'double emphasis', since both OBJECTIVE and LOCATIVE appear to be stressed in 3.h. and 3.i. The difference between 3.h. and 3.i., on the other hand, appears to be one of topicalization or focus, as was the difference between 3.a. and 3.e., which also involved inversion of OBJECTIVE and LOCATIVE.

3. Other possible arguments of the verb 'be'.

3.1. BENEFACTIVE

I would like to come back now to the possible arguments of the predicate 'be' other than OBJECTIVE, LOCATIVE, and DATIVE.

Consider again sentence 7.a.:

7.a. KIRI ON ISALE

'The letter is for the father'

where kiri is OBJECTIVE and isale, in the surface allative case, would correspond in function to the BENEFACTIVE of Fillmore's Case Grammar. An inversion is possible, with concomitant change in focus:

7.b. ISALE ON KIRI

'There is a letter for father'

One of the possible arguments of 'be' thus is BENEFACTIVE.⁹

⁹Neither DATIVE nor BENEFACTIVE correspond directly to an indirect object in the ordinary sense of the term.

3.2. ESSIVE.

Another possible argument is ESSIVE, which may appear in several surface cases, sometimes with semantic distinctions between them, as was the case with the argument labeled LOCATIVE. I shall group under ESSIVE the arguments appearing in nominative, (surface) essive and translative cases;

11. NN ON MEIE SAADIK LONDONIS

'NN is our ambassador in London'

12. NN ON MEIE SAADIKUNA LONDONIS

'NN is our ambassador in London'

13. NN ON MEIE SAADIKUKS LONDONIS

'NN is our ambassador in London'

In all three sentences, NN is OBJECTIVE, meie saadik 'our ambassador' is ESSIVE, and Londonis is LOCATIVE (in the surface inessive case). ESSIVE is manifested as surface nominative in 11, surface essive in 12, and surface translative in 13. The

semantic differences involved are subtle, but clear: 11 implies that being ambassador is a permanent (inalienable) characteristic of NN, 12 implies that NN is (temporarily) in London in his capacity as ambassador (he need not be the permanent or regular ambassador to London, or he may be in London occasionally in other capacities), and 13 implies that NN is fulfilling the role of ambassador (in an official capacity, but it is not a permanent characteristic of NN).

ESSIVE may also appear in the surface partitive case, with partitive meaning, as was the case with OBJECTIVE. The surface partitive seems to require plurality, even when OBJECTIVE (i.e., the surface subject of the sentence with 'be' as predicate) is in the singular. Compare 14 and 15:

14. NN ON PARIM ÕPILANE KLASSIS

'NN is the best student in the class'

where NN is OBJECTIVE, parim õpilane 'best student' is ESSIVE in the nominative singular case, and klassis 'in the class' is LOCATIVE in the inessive singular.

15. NN ON PARIMAIÐ ÕPILASI KLASSIS

'NN is one of the best students in the class'

where parimaid õpilasi is ESSIVE in partitive plural.

One might ask now what constitutes the difference between the arguments OBJECTIVE and ESSIVE, especially since both may appear in the same surface cases (the arguments have surface nominative and partitive in common as possible cases). I shall opt for Fillmore's solution¹⁰ and claim that only one element

¹⁰Cf. "Lexical Entries for Verbs". Fillmore has recently modified this statement, recognizing that at least as far as LOCATIVE is concerned, more than one argument of the same type may be simultaneously present. This holds for Estonian as well as English; cf. below under 3.3.

can fulfill a particular role at any one time. OBJECTIVE takes

precedence over ESSIVE.¹¹ If only one argument that might

¹¹Here and in many instances, there is a hierarchy among the arguments which might be compared with valence in chemistry: in combining with each other, certain elements require a given proportion, and some elements take precedence over other elements in entering a compound. It will be shown below that some arguments may appear only when another argument is already present.

fulfill either role is present, it becomes OBJECTIVE. If an OBJECTIVE is already present, the other element assumes the role of ESSIVE.¹²

¹²The addition of ESSIVE to Case Grammar is an innovation. Fillmore, according to oral communication, would treat 'be' with arguments I have labeled ESSIVE as complex predicates. I see no essential difference between the arguments in ESSIVE and other arguments of 'be'; if 'be' constitutes a complex predicate with an argument in ESSIVE, its occurrences with other arguments should likewise be treated as complex predicates. As will be shown below, 'be' shares all of its arguments with other verbs, even those in ESSIVE; and I cannot accept the necessary conclusion that the same word, in the same surface case and the same function (that is, in the same deep structure case), is part of a complex predicate when the verb is 'be', and an argument of a predicate when the verb is something else.

3.3. Terminative.

Of the fourteen surface cases of Estonian, 'be' thus has been shown to take arguments in nominative, partitive, the six local cases, essive and translative. If indeed 'be' may have arguments in all 14 cases (which need not be true), terminative, abessive, comitative, and genitive must be accounted for.

Consider a sentence like 16.:

16. VESI ON KAE LANI

'The water is (i.e., reaches) up to the neck'

In this sentence, vesi is the noun 'water' in nominative singular, appearing in the role of OBJECTIVE. Kaelani is the noun kael 'neck' in the surface terminative case. The terminative case expresses limitation in space and/or time; the class of words that may appear in this function is rather large.

Consider the following additional examples:

17. AIATÖÖD OLI LUMENI
'There was gardening (work) until snowfall'
18. OLIME HOMMIKUNI
'We were (stayed) until morning'
19. OLGE LÕPUNI
'Remain (stay) until the end'

The arguments appearing in the terminative case could perhaps be grouped with the external and internal local cases under LOCATIVE. The fact that the terminative is frequently used with expressions of time should not argue against it, considering that other local cases are likewise used in time expressions. A more serious objection would be the claim, expressed by Fillmore in "Lexical Entries for Verbs", that in Case Grammar only one argument may be present in a given function, and LOCATIVE would be pre-empted in sentences like 20:

20. NN ON KAELANI VEES
'NN is in the water up to (his) neck'

where vees is the noun vesi 'water' in the inessive case, obviously manifesting the argument LOCATIVE. Sentence 20. could be considered a counter-argument for the claim that only one argument may be present in a given case; however, the claim cannot be upheld anyway, considering that multiple locatives abound in Estonian (as well as in other languages). If words in the terminative case are treated as manifestations of LOCATIVE (even when used in a temporal sense), sentence 20. would simply contain two LOCATIVES, one in inessive, the other in terminative.

3.4. ASSOCIATIVE.

The abessive and comitative cases seem to reflect the positive and negative aspects of the same relationship. In the case of 'be', only the associative meaning is present; with other verbs, the functions of instrument and accompaniment (association) seem to have merged and are expressed by the same surface cases. I shall call the argument ASSOCIATIVE.¹³ With

¹³My ASSOCIATIVE includes Fillmore's INSTRUMENTAL. Cf. (p. 24) 'Case for Case.' It might be argued that the comitative and instrumental represent different functions and therefore should be kept separate. I am not sure that the distinction is a necessary one, at least from the point of view of Estonian; it appears to me that the problem might be handled at the level of the lexicon. The unity of the ASSOCIATIVE is also reflected in the fact that the surface abessive case is used to negate both positive aspects of ASSOCIATIVE, comitative as well as instrumental.

the verb 'be' as predicate, ASSOCIATIVE is usually not the only argument, but some other argument (such as LOCATIVE) is also present:

21.a. NN ON SÕPRADETA

'NN is without friends'

where sõpradeta is abessive plural of the noun sõber 'friend', and the sentence implies a more or less permanent state of friendlessness;

22.a. NN ON SÕPRADEGA

'NN is with friends'

where sõpradega is the same noun in comitative plural, and the sentence seems somewhat incomplete (one expects a LOCATIVE to be present also: NN is somewhere with friends).

Both sentences seem more acceptable with other arguments present, e.g.:

21.b. NN ON SÕPRADETA LINNAS

'NN is in town without friends'

22.b. NN ON SOPRADEGA LINNAS

'NN is in town with friends'

The arguments DATIVE and ASSOCIATIVE seem to exclude each other; if DATIVE has been chosen, ASSOCIATIVE may not appear. This explains the relationship between 23 and 24, which are paraphrases of each other:

23. NOORMEHEL ON UHKE HOLAK

'The young man has a proud bearing'

24. NOORMEES ON UHKE HOIAKUGA

'The young man is with a proud bearing'

In sentence 23, 'be' has the arguments DATIVE (noormehel, 'the young man', in the adessive case) and OBJECTIVE (uhke hoiak 'proud bearing' in the nominative singular). In sentence 24, 'be' has the arguments OBJECTIVE (noormees 'the young man' in nominative singular) and ASSOCIATIVE (uhke hoiakuga 'proud bearing' in comitative singular).

It was stated above that with 'be', OBJECTIVE takes precedence over ESSIVE. It now appears that DATIVE and OBJECTIVE both take precedence over ASSOCIATIVE. The hierarchy of arguments a verb may take constitutes another part of the information that has to be included in the lexical entries for verbs.

3.5. DATIVE again.

The last surface case to be considered is the genitive. Consider again sentence 1.:

1.a. ISAL ON RAAMAT

'Father has a book'

where isal is DATIVE in the adessive case. It was pointed out above that the inversion of this sentence is not acceptable:

1.d. *RAAMAT ON ISAL is not a topicalization of DATIVE, but a change of the role of isal from DATIVE to LOCATIVE which is unacceptable on semantic grounds. It is now possible to suggest a reason for the unacceptability of 1.d.: if DATIVE is topicalized

(i.e., placed after 'be'), it changes from the surface adessive to genitive, and often is reinforced by the particle oma 'own'. Thus l.e. is a perfectly acceptable topicalization of the DATIVE, and genitive is another possible surface case of the DATIVE.

l.e. RAAMAT ON ISA (OMA)

'The book is father's'.

4. Arguments of 'be' shared by other verbs.

4.1. DATIVE.

In the Introduction, I advanced the claim that all Estonian verbs can be best classified according to the number and types of arguments they take, and that there is no need to assume that 'be' has a special copula function that sets it off from other verbs. I shall now briefly support this claim by showing that other verbs exist that share the same arguments with 'be'.¹⁴

¹⁴Haldur Ōim has raised the question whether the very fact that 'be' can have so many different arguments is not suspicious and indicative of some kind of syncretism. In my analysis, 'be' can have six arguments: DATIVE, LOCATIVE, OBJECTIVE, BENEFACTIVE, ESSIVE, and ASSOCIATIVE. I do not consider six arguments excessive; there are numerous verbs that take at least as many arguments as 'be'. Consider, for example, the verb võtma 'to take', which takes five of the six arguments of 'be', and a few additional ones: AGENTIVE, FACTITIVE, and INSTRUMENTAL (if the latter is to be considered distinct from ASSOCIATIVE). Examples: EMA VOTAB LASTEGA HOMMIKUEINET 'Mother takes breakfast with the children' (Ema - AGENTIVE, lastega - ASSOCIATIVE, hommikueinet - FACTITIVE); MEES VOTTIS ROOBIGA TULEST SÜSI 'The man took coals from the fire with a poker' (tulest - LOCATIVE, roobiga - INSTRUMENTAL, if this is to be considered different from ASSOCIATIVE); VEND VOTTIS LAPSEPÕLVE SÕBRATARI NAISEKS '(The) brother took (his) childhood sweetheart as wife' (i.e., married her) (naiseks - ESSIVE in translativ); TA VOTTIS SEDA NALJANA 'He took it as a joke' (naljana - ESSIVE in (surface) essive); TA VOTTIS SELLE OMALE PARISEKS 'He took it for himself as permanent possession' (omale - BENEFACTIVE); TA VOTTIS MUL SÕNAD SUUST 'He took the words out of my mouth' (mul - DATIVE). LOCATIVE may appear in all local cases as well as in the terminative case. The only real case-structure

difference between 'be' and 'take' is the presence of OBJECTIVE with 'be' and AGENTIVE and FACTITIVE with 'take'. This difference is shared by many other verb pairs.

(Verbs should be grouped in the same class, if they take exactly the same kinds of arguments; but the classes will have extensive overlaps among themselves.)

The order in which the arguments are presented is the same as was followed above, although it is not necessarily the most logical one.

Consider the following examples:

25. AEDNIKUL ON MITMESUGUSEID LILLI

'The gardener has many kinds of flowers'

26. AEDNIKUL ÖITSEB MITMESUGUSEID LILLI

'The gardener has many kinds of flowers in bloom'

The difference between the two sentences is in the verbs appearing as Predicate: in 25. on is 'be' in 3 sg. pres., and in 26 Öitseb is 'bloom' in the same form. In both sentences, mitmesuguseid lilli is OBJECTIVE in partitive plural, and aednikul is DATIVE in the adessive case. The class of verbs which may appear in this Predicate includes also kasvab 'grows', juurdub 'takes root', närtsib 'wilts', edeneb 'makes progress', lõhnab 'gives off fragrance', etc. Examples could be multiplied; I shall limit myself in the future to one apiece.

4.2. OBJECTIVE.

Since I have chosen to call the surface subject of a sentence OBJECTIVE,¹⁵ 'be' shares this argument with practically all verbs

¹⁵Except where it is clearly AGENTIVE. Cf. 'Case for Case'.
(p. 24)

in the language, excepting, of course, instances in which the verb appears in the impersonal voice. These verb forms preclude

the presence of a surface subject, but admit a surface object (in the nominative and partitive); I would classify the surface object as FACTITIVE in Case Grammar.¹⁶ Sentences 25 and

¹⁶Cf. 'Case for Case'. (p. 25)

26 may serve also to illustrate that 'be' and 'blossom' share the argument OBJECTIVE, here mitmesuguseid lilli 'many kinds of flowers' in partitive plural.

4.3. LOCATIVE.

Most verbs can have a LOCATIVE argument; however, verbs differ among themselves which of the six local cases may appear as this argument. The verb 'come' shares four manifestations of LOCATIVE with 'be':

- 27. (cf. 4) MEES TULEB MAALT
'The man comes from the country'
- 28. (cf. 5) MEES TULEB LINNAST
'The man comes from town'
- 29. (cf. 7) ISALE TULI KIRI
'A letter came for the father'
- 30. (cf. 7) MEES TULEB MAALE
'The man comes to the country'
- 31. (cf. 8) MEES TULEB LINNA
'The man comes to town'

Semantic reasons seem to exclude the surface cases inessive and adessive from appearing with 'come',¹⁷ but other verbs, such as

¹⁷Adessive and inessive are possible, provided another LOCATIVE argument is present. Huno Rätsep has suggested sentences like MEES TULEB TÄNAVANURGAL AUTOSSE 'The man comes into the car (i.e., enters the car) on the streetcorner', where

tänavanurgal is LOCATIVE in the adessive case and autosse is LOCATIVE in the illative case.

'work', may have them:

32. (cf. 6) MEES TOOTAB LINNAS

'The man works ^{....} in the city'

33. (cf. 2) MEES TOOTAB MAAL

'The man works in the country'

Note that 30 has a purely locative sense, whereas in 7, the allative served to manifest an underlying BENEFACTIVE. This is one difference between the verbs 'come' and 'be' that has to be entered in the dictionary when the two verbs are lexically specified.

4.4. BENEFACTIVE.

As was mentioned above, a surface allative may serve as LOCATIVE (although not with 'be') and as BENEFACTIVE. A great number of predicates may take this argument; its scope is much wider than that of the traditional indirect object, although indirect objects are encompassed under BENEFACTIVE. Consider an example:

34. (cf. 7) ISALE TULI KIRI

'A letter came for the father'

4.5. ESSIVE.

A much smaller group of verbs can take an ESSIVE argument. The group that may take ESSIVE arguments in essive or translative cases includes 'to work' and 'to appoint'. Consider 35 and 36:

35. (cf. 12) NN TOOTAB MEIE SAADIKUNA LONDONIS

'NN works in London as our ambassador'

36. (cf. 13) NN MAARATI MEIE SAADIKUKS LONDONI(S)

'NN was appointed our ambassador in London'

The list of verbs that can take an ESSIVE argument in nominative and/or partitive is very small, and the group seems semantically definable: these verbs signify seeming, appearing, being taken for etc. The examples I can think of at the moment have adjectives rather than nouns in ESSIVE (but since there is a very fluid boundary between nouns and adjectives, this need not be a significant restriction):

- 37.a. RASKUS ON ULETAMATU
 'The difficulty is insurmountable'
 37.b. RASKUS NAIB ULETAMATU
 'The difficulty seems insurmountable'

4.6. TERMINATIVE.

Many verbs can have arguments in the terminative case, which is considered a possible surface case of LOCATIVE. Examples include 38 and 39:

38. (cf. 16) VESI ULATUB KAE LANI
 'The water reaches up to the neck'
 39. (cf. 18) TOOTASIME HOMMIKUNI
 'We worked until morning'

4.7. ASSOCIATIVE.

As was mentioned above, the argument ASSOCIATIVE has the function of accompaniment rather than instrument with the verb 'be'. Other verbs may have arguments in the surface comitative (and abessive) cases in both functions:

40. ISA KONELEB LASTEGA
 'Father speaks with the children'
 41. ISA LOEB PRILLIDEGA
 'Father reads with spectacles'
 42. ISA SOOB KAHVLIGA
 'Father eats with a fork'

'Father eats without a fork'

4.8. Other arguments.

There are some arguments suggested by Case Grammar that do not appear with 'be' in Estonian. In particular, the arguments AGENTIVE and FACTITIVE appeared unnecessary for the development of the description. I believe that their absence is significant as regards the semantics of 'be'; in other words, it is one of the characteristics of 'be' (which it shares with a large number of other verbs) that it takes neither a FACTITIVE nor an AGENTIVE argument.

It has been shown that so far as its relationship to arguments is concerned, 'be' in Estonian functions just like any other verb and that it is not necessary to postulate a 'copula'.¹⁸ There is

¹⁸It may be relevant in this connection that verbless sentences (so-called nominal sentences) exist in present-day Estonian and in related languages, and are reconstructed for the protolanguage. In such sentences the relationships between elements are expressed simply by cases. Very similar observations have been made regarding early stages of Indo-European. W. Lehmann has stated (in the Collitz lecture delivered at the summer 1968 meeting of the Linguistic Society of America at Urbana, Illinois) that a copula need not be reconstructed for Proto-Indo-European. Incidentally, the similarity extends to the construction used in Estonian to express 'having'. According to Lehmann, Proto-Indo-European went through a stage in which the verb 'have' had not yet evolved (cf., for example, Latin mihi est liber = 'I have a book', literally 'to me there is a book').

a further bit of evidence that 'be' is a regular enough verb: it may be modified by a manner adverb like the majority of verbs.¹⁹

¹⁹I am leaving unanswered at the moment the question of how adverbs should be treated in a Case Grammar description of Estonian.

38
Compare sentences 44 and 45:

44. ASJAD ON HALVAD

'Things are bad'

45. ASJAD ON HALVASTI

'Things are badly' (i.e., are going badly, are in a bad state)

In 45, halvasti is an adverb, derived from the adjective halb 'bad' by the productive adverbial suffix -sti. Adverbs of this kind can be formed from most adjectives, and they modify most (if not all) verbs.

The ideas expressed above are very tentative, and the 'testing for fit' between Case Grammar and Estonian syntax has only just begun. The situation looks, however, promising. It seems to me that it is possible to explain Estonian grammatical facts more naturally and intuitively more acceptably within the framework of Case Grammar than within any other grammatical framework, and I hope that more serious work in this direction will be undertaken soon.